

WHEN NOT TO USE STAYMAN

	S A876 H QJ6 D Q92 CAK8	
S J4 H K1072 D 10854 C 762		S 932 H A95 D K73 C Q1043
	S KQ105 H 843 D AJ6 C J95	

The auction on the above hand went:

N S
1N 2C
2S 4S

On this auction, East led a trump. Declarer tried but could only manage to take 9 tricks even though the D finesse worked. However NS did not own the D 10 so had to lose 1 Diamond, 2 Hearts and one Club.

Down one.

After the hand was over, NS realized that while they could not make 4S, they could have made 3NT. So, they pondered, what went wrong?

Just because you have a tool in your shed, it doesn't mean that you have to use it - no matter what. South used Stayman just because he owned a 4 card major. He failed to consider that with a perfectly balanced hand and NO ruffing values (short suits) that it would be easier to make 9 tricks in 3NT than 10 tricks in a major.

RULE: Do not use Stayman when you have a 4-3-3-3 hand. We are programmed to always want to play a hand in a major when we have an 8 card fit. We can draw trump and still have one trump left in declarer's hand and one in dummy. These trumps can then be scored separately by means of ruffing (trumping), allowing declarer to win one more trick in the major than he could in No Trump (420 versus 400 on the score sheet).

BUT for this to be able to happen, there must be a short suit somewhere. With no short suit, avoid using Stayman. Responder to a 1NT opener holding 10+ HCP and a 4 card major and 4-3-3-3 should simply bid 3NT.

Responder with 9 HCP should raise merely to 2NT: This asks opener if he has 15 to pass and if he has 17 to bid 3NT...With 16, he should decide if he likes his hand: 10's and 9's versus 2's and 3's. Possession of a 5 card suit would also be a reason to accept the invitation and bid 3NT.

There is one other factor: He should check to see who he is playing against. If they look like gentle souls, he should bid 3NT !

Responder to a 1NT opener with 4-3-3-3 and exactly 8 HCP should pass. It will be right most of the time.

A WRINKLE FOR KEY CARD BLACKWOOD

When you know that your side has 10 trumps between you. e.g. You open 1S with AK7642 and partner responds using Jacoby 2NT which guarantees 4 or more of opener's major suit.

1S - 2NT * (Jacoby 2NT if you have agreed to play this)

3S - 4NT

4 NT asks you how many Key Cards you have (the four aces and the King of Spades if you have agreed to play Key card Blackwood)

You, West, if you have 2 key cards but NO QUEEN OF TRUMPS, would normally bid 5H. BUT if you know that your side has 10 trumps (because you as Opener have a six card suit), respond and pretend you DO OWN the Queen of trump. Respond 5S instead of 5H as odds are high that the Queen will fall. This is a recommended little white lie.

NO TRUMP BIDDING by JEAN COLLINS

Assume the opponents pass throughout and the auction goes 1NT-2D-2H. What does the 2D bidder bid next? Of course it depends on what he has in his hand.

1NT - 2D

2H

So, in the following auctions, what does the final bid shown tell us about the responder's hand?

1. 1NT-2D-2H-Pass What does Responder have for his Pass?

2. 1NT-2D-2H-2NT What does Responder have for his 2NT bid?

3. 1NT-2D-2H-3H What does Responder have for his 3H bid?

4. 1NT-2D-2H-3NT What does Responder have for his 3NT bid?

5. 1NT-2D-2H-4H What does Responder have for his 4H bid?

6. 1NT-2D-2H-4C What does Responder have for his 4C bid?

ANSWERS by BARBARA

1) Five or six Hearts and no interest in game or in even inviting game.

0-5 HCP and a 5 or 6 card Heart suit.

or 0-7 HCP and a 5-card Heart suit.

2) 8-9 HCP and a 5-card Heart suit.

3) 6-7 HCP and a 6-card Heart suit inviting game in Hearts.

4) 10-14 HCP and a 5-card Heart suit. Opener with 3 Hearts now bids 4H.

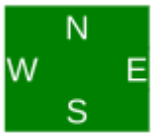
5) 8-13 HCP and a 6-card Heart suit (This assumes you are not playing Texas Transfers or you would have bid 4D first with this hand to show 8-13 (or 14) HCP and a 6-card Heart suit.

6) 4C is Gerber. Once Stayman or Transfers have entered the auction, you have lost the ability to now use Blackwood (either variety). After all, you have not agreed on a trump suit as opener COULD have two little Hearts.

Some people play 4C here as Key Card Gerber but your partnership must first agree to that.

TO DOUBLE OR NOT TO DOUBLE by ANDREW ROBSON

When the opponents have reached a contract that you do not think they will make, it might seem sensible to double, thereby scoring more points. But it is not quite so simple - what if they then run to an alternative contract?

South Deals N-S Vul	♠ A J 10 9 ♥ A 6 5 3 ♦ J 8 4 2 ♣ 7		
♠ 7 4 3 ♥ 7 ♦ 7 6 5 3 ♣ K J 9 8 3		♠ K 8 6 5 2 ♥ Q J 10 8 ♦ — ♣ Q 10 6 2	
	♠ Q ♥ K 9 4 2 ♦ A K Q 10 9 ♣ A 5 4		
West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦ * 3 or 0 key cards
Pass	6♥	Dbl	Pass
Pass	7♦	Dbl	All Pass

North bid aggressively to a Small Slam. But when East doubled 6♥, North reassessed. It was clear East's ♥s were strong enough to defeat 6♥ so North decided to make ♦s trumps - even though it meant bidding a Grand Slam. East doubled 7♦ - perhaps less confidently - and West led ♥7.

South won ♥K, cashed ♣A, trumped ♣4 with ♦2, led ♦4 to ♦9 (noting East discard - ♠5), trumped ♣5 with ♦8, and overtook ♦J with ♦Q to draw West's remaining trumps (North discarding ♥65 leaving ♠AJ109 and ♥A in dummy). He then led ♠Q to ♠A and "ran" ♠J - (called a "ruffing finesse"). East covered with ♠K (South would have discarded ♥2 if East had played low), so declarer trumped, crossed to ♥A and now played his good ♠109. He had actually made his doubled Grand Slam! East was left to rue his double of 6♥ - he should have passed and quietly defeated the 6♥ contract with his two trump tricks.

ANDREW'S TIP: Do not double a contract unless you will still be happy if they run to an alternative contract.

LEAD FACE-DOWN

In face-to-face bridge

When it is your turn to make the opening lead, you should always place the card face-down on the table in front of you and ask: "Any questions, partner?" This gives your partner a chance to ask any questions about significant bids that have taken place at the table. Partner should not ask any questions when it is NOT her turn to lead until AFTER the opening lead is made. This way she cannot be perceived to be transmitting suggestions to you about what you should lead.

After the lead is made face-down, then partner can ask questions. It also gives partner an opportunity to tell you that it is NOT your lead at all! In this case, you would be allowed to pick up your card and put it back in your hand.

Interestingly enough, after putting your card face-down on the table, (even if no questions have been asked,) if you should now decide you wish to switch your opening lead to a different card, you may not do so. This would be giving a mild message to your partner that your choice of opening lead was not clear-cut.

We may never give unauthorized information to our partner. This just means that we can use our bids or our cards to signal our attitude towards her lead, but we may never use body language of any sort.

So next time your partner says: "Any questions, partner?" don't look at her as though she's got rocks in her head, she is merely following protocol. If you have no questions and it is partner's opening lead, say "no questions, partner!"